UNIVERSITY LECTURE SLIDES

Research Ethics, Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

A step-by-step guide to ethical research, responsible writing, citation, authorship, and publication practice.

Author: Muhammad Hassan
Website: ResearchMethod.net

Lecture Overview

35-slide lecture

What this session covers and how the ideas connect.

1

Ethical foundations

Principles that protect people and make research trustworthy.

2

Plagiarism and misconduct

How academic writing can become unethical, even unintentionally.

3

Academic integrity in practice

Citation, paraphrasing, authorship, data handling, and responsible reporting.

4

Application and assessment

Examples, a research scenario, activity, discussion, and knowledge check.

From responsible design → credible evidence → trustworthy scholarship

Learning Objectives

After completing this lecture, students should be able to:

1. Define research ethics, plagiarism, academic integrity, and research misconduct.
2. Explain core ethical principles: respect for persons, beneficence, justice, honesty, and accountability.
3. Identify common forms of plagiarism and distinguish them from correct paraphrasing and citation.
4. Apply an ethical review checklist to a basic research proposal.
5. Evaluate authorship, data management, confidentiality, and conflict-of-interest issues.
6. Recommend best practices for trustworthy academic writing and responsible research reporting.

Introduction: Why Ethics and Integrity Matter

Research is valuable only when people can trust how it was conducted and reported.

Research ethics protects participants, communities, researchers, and the public. Academic integrity protects the meaning of scholarship by ensuring that ideas, data, and evidence are presented honestly.

01 **Protect people**

Consent, privacy, safety, dignity

02 **Protect knowledge**

Accurate data, honest interpretation

03 **Protect credibility**

Trust between students, researchers, journals, and society

Key Definitions

Important concepts used throughout the lecture.

Research ethics
Principles and procedures that guide responsible research with people, data, animals, communities, and institutions.

Academic integrity
Commitment to honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility, and trust in learning and scholarship.

Plagiarism
Using another person’s words, ideas, data, images, or structure without proper acknowledgement.

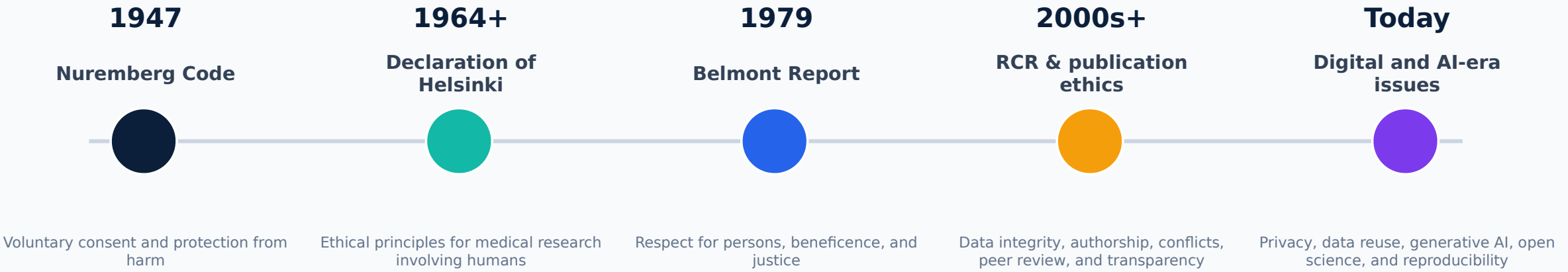
Informed consent
Voluntary agreement based on clear information about the study, risks, benefits, and rights.

Confidentiality
A duty to protect identifiable information from unauthorized disclosure.

Research misconduct
Serious breach such as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in research activities.

Background and Context

Modern research ethics developed from lessons learned after harmful and unethical studies.



Core message: research progress never justifies avoidable harm, deception without safeguards, unfair participant selection, or dishonest reporting.

PRINCIPLES

Core Ethical Principles

Ethical research balances participant rights, scientific value, and social responsibility.

R

Respect for persons

Treat participants as autonomous individuals; provide extra protection for those with limited autonomy.

B

Beneficence

Maximize possible benefits and minimize foreseeable risks or harms.

J

Justice

Distribute burdens and benefits fairly; avoid exploiting vulnerable groups.

A

Honesty & accountability

Report methods, data, limitations, and authorship contributions transparently.

A useful test: Could you clearly justify your decisions to participants, supervisors, journals, and the public?

Ethics Review: IRB / Research Ethics Committee

Most universities require independent review before collecting data from human participants.

1

Why review exists

Independent review reduces bias, checks risks, and protects participants.

2

What reviewers examine

Purpose, design, recruitment, consent, risks, benefits, privacy, data security, and dissemination.

3

When to apply

Before recruitment, data collection, interventions, observation, or access to identifiable records.

Informed Consent

Consent is a process, not only a signature on a form.

1 Information

Explain the study purpose, procedures, expected time, risks, benefits, and data use.

2 Understanding

Use clear language and allow questions. Avoid pressure and technical jargon.

3 Voluntariness

Participation should be freely chosen, with the right to withdraw when possible.

4 Documentation

Record consent appropriately: written, digital, verbal, or implied when approved.

Student-friendly phrase: “Participants must know what they are joining, what could happen, and that they can say no without penalty.”

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Data Protection

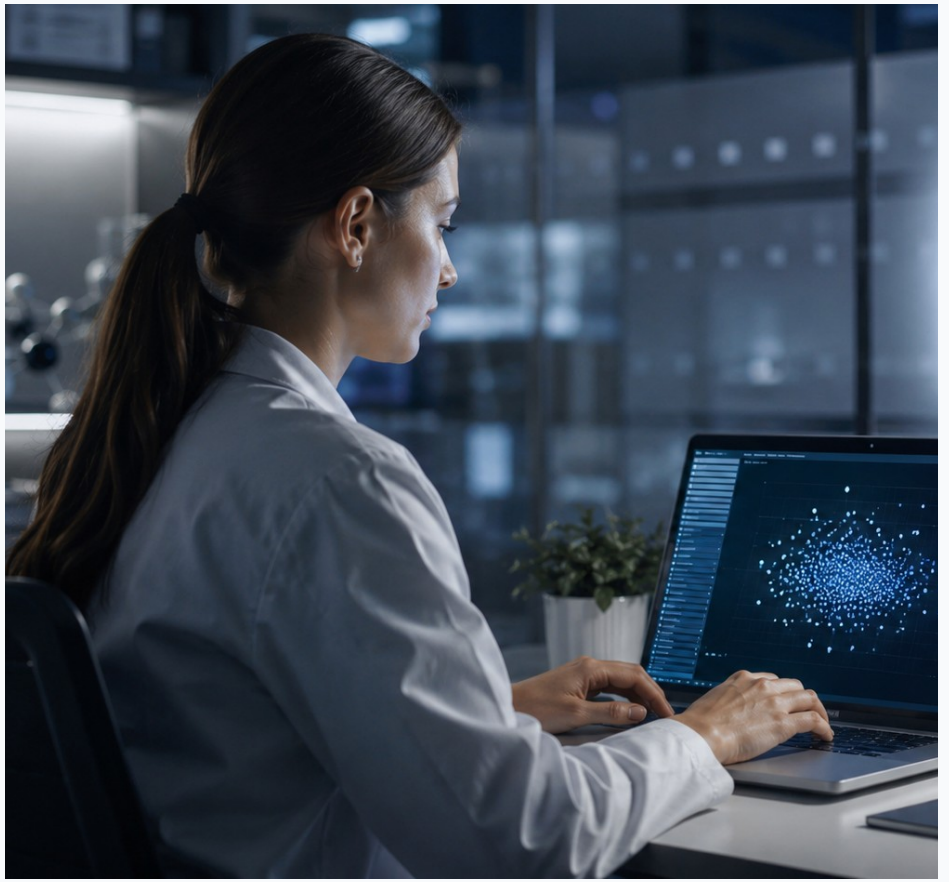
Ethical data management begins before data are collected.

1. **Data minimization**
   Collect only what is necessary for the research question.

2. **De-identification**
   Remove or code direct identifiers when possible.

3. **Secure storage**
   Use password protection, encryption, access control, and backup plans.

4. **Responsible sharing**
   Share only in ways consistent with consent, law, and institutional rules.



Vulnerable Participants and Fair Recruitment

Ethics requires special care when power, dependence, or risk is unequal.

Children and minors

Require guardian permission and age-appropriate assent where applicable.

Patients and clients

Separate research participation from treatment or services.

Students or employees

Reduce pressure from grades, jobs, supervisors, or teachers.

Marginalized groups

Avoid stereotypes, stigma, and extractive research practices.

Low-literacy participants

Use understandable language and accessible formats.

Digitally traceable groups

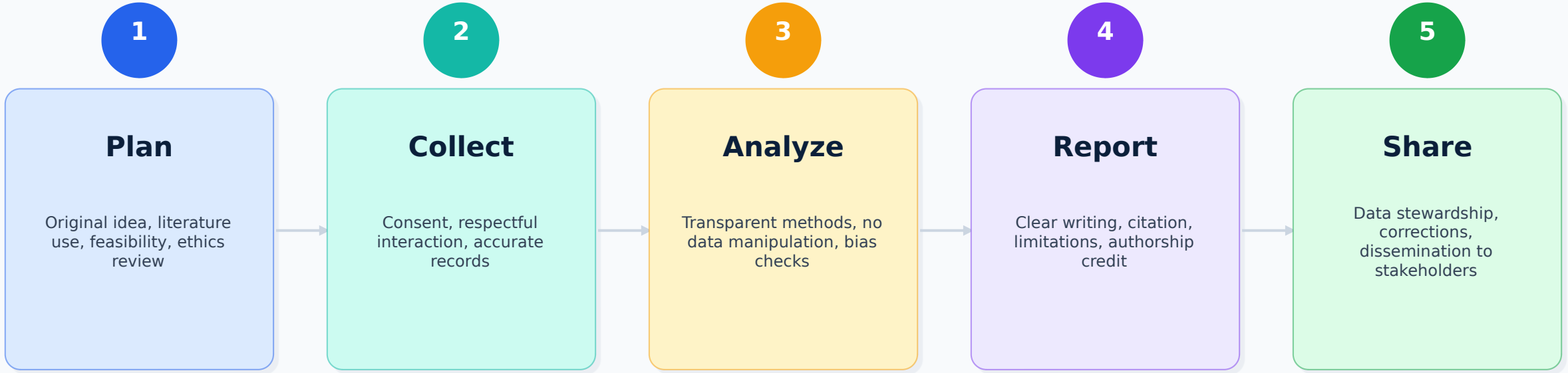
Protect identity in online communities and small samples.

Fair recruitment means participants are selected because they fit the research question—not because they are easy to access or less able to refuse.

LIFECYCLE

Integrity Across the Research Lifecycle

Ethics and integrity apply at every stage of research—not only data collection.



Ethical weakness in one stage can affect the credibility of the entire study.

Plagiarism: More Than Copying Text

Plagiarism is a misuse of intellectual contribution and source credit.

Words

Copying exact wording without quotation marks and citation.

Ideas

Using theories, explanations, arguments, or interpretations without acknowledgement.

Data / images

Using tables, figures, code, datasets, or visuals without permission or citation.

Structure

Following another work’s organization or logic too closely without credit.

Correct academic writing is not just “not copied”; it clearly shows what is yours and what comes from sources.

Major Types of Plagiarism

Students should recognize both obvious and hidden forms.

Type	What it looks like	Prevention
Direct plagiarism	Copying exact text without quotation marks and citation.	Use quotation marks sparingly and cite the source.
Mosaic / patchwriting	Mixing copied phrases with minor word changes.	Close the source, write in your own structure, then cite.
Paraphrase plagiarism	Rewriting too closely or using the same logic without credit.	Change wording and structure; cite the idea.
Self-plagiarism	Reusing your own previous work without disclosure.	Ask permission and cite or disclose prior work.
Source-based plagiarism	Citing a source you did not read or misrepresenting it.	Track sources accurately and verify claims.
AI-assisted plagiarism	Submitting AI output or generated text/data as your own when rules prohibit or require disclosure.	Follow institutional policy and disclose permitted assistance.

COMPARISON

Related Concepts: Plagiarism, Poor Paraphrasing, and Copyright

These concepts overlap, but they are not identical.

Plagiarism

An academic credit problem: the source of ideas, words, or materials is not acknowledged.

Cite + write honestly

Poor paraphrasing

A writing-quality and citation problem: source wording or structure remains too close.

Rewrite + cite

Copyright

A legal-permission problem: protected material may require permission even if cited.

Cite + seek permission when needed

Academic Integrity in Practice

Integrity means making honest choices when producing, collaborating, and submitting work.

O

Original contribution

Make clear what analysis, argument, or interpretation is yours.

C

Proper citation

Acknowledge words, ideas, data, images, tools, and methods.

G

Fair collaboration

Follow assignment rules for individual vs group work.

A

Authorship credit

List authors according to real contribution and discipline rules.

T

Transparency about tools

Disclose AI, software, editing, or statistical assistance when required.

R

Responsibility after submission

Correct errors and respond honestly to feedback or concerns.

Research Misconduct: Fabrication, Falsification, Plagiarism

The “FFP” framework is widely used to describe serious research misconduct.

F

Fabrication

Making up data, results, participants, observations, or records.

F

Falsification

Manipulating methods, materials, images, equipment, or data so the record is inaccurate.

P

Plagiarism

Using another person’s ideas, words, processes, or results without giving appropriate credit.

Many institutions distinguish serious misconduct from honest error or differences of interpretation, but all require careful documentation and transparent correction.

Publication Ethics and Responsible Reporting

Publication is part of the research process and has its own integrity responsibilities.

Accurate reporting	Methods, sample, exclusions, limitations, and results should be reported clearly.
Authorship and acknowledgements	Credit should reflect contribution; ghost and gift authorship are unethical.
Conflicts of interest	Financial, personal, professional, or institutional interests should be disclosed.
Peer review integrity	Reviewers must keep manuscripts confidential and avoid misuse of privileged information.
Corrections and retractions	Errors should be corrected; unreliable work may need formal correction or retraction.

PROCESS

Step-by-Step Ethical Research Workflow

A practical sequence students can use when planning a study.

1. **Define the research problem**
   Clarify purpose, value, and possible risks.
2. **Review institutional rules**
   Check ethics-review, data, and discipline requirements.
3. **Design safeguards**
   Plan consent, recruitment, privacy, and risk reduction.
4. **Submit for review**
   Obtain approval before data collection where required.
5. **Collect and manage data**
   Respect consent terms and keep secure records.
6. **Analyze and report honestly**
   Cite sources, disclose limitations, and correct errors.

Practical Examples Across Disciplines

Ethical issues differ by discipline, but the logic of protection and honesty is consistent.

Discipline	Possible study	Key integrity issue	Good practice
Social sciences	Interviews with migrants	Sensitive identity and power imbalance	Confidentiality, voluntary consent, careful wording
Business & management	Survey of employees	Employer pressure and conflict of interest	Anonymous survey, independent recruitment
Education	Student achievement study	Teacher-student power relationship	No penalty for refusal; protect grades/data
Health sciences	Patient experience survey	Privacy and clinical vulnerability	Ethics approval, de-identification, secure records
Psychology	Stress experiment	Risk, deception, and debriefing	Minimize harm; explain afterward when approved
Information technology	User behavior log analysis	Digital traceability and consent scope	Data minimization, anonymization, access controls

Detailed Research Scenario

Applying ethics and integrity decisions in a realistic student study.

Research topic

Use of AI writing tools among master’s students

Research problem

Unclear boundaries between assistance, authorship, and plagiarism

Research question

How do students understand and apply academic-integrity rules when using AI tools?

Participants

Master’s students from three departments

Data collection

Anonymous survey + optional interviews

Analysis

Descriptive statistics for survey; thematic analysis for interviews

Expected interpretation

Identify knowledge gaps and propose integrity-training improvements

Ethics safeguards: informed consent, no collection of student names, optional interviews, secure data storage, and transparent AI-use policy in reporting.

BENEFITS

Advantages of Strong Ethics and Integrity

Ethical practice strengthens both research quality and academic reputation.

Protects participants

Reduces risk and supports respect, dignity, and autonomy.

Improves data quality

Honest procedures produce more reliable and credible evidence.

Builds public trust

Transparent research is more likely to be accepted and used.

Supports publication

Journals and universities expect ethical approval and integrity statements.

Reduces academic penalties

Good citation and writing practices prevent plagiarism problems.

Develops professional identity

Students learn habits needed for responsible scholarship and careers.

Limitations, Challenges, and Common Concerns

Ethics can be complex when values, rules, and practical constraints conflict.

1

Time and bureaucracy

Ethics approval can feel slow, especially for student deadlines.

2

Ambiguous situations

Online data, AI assistance, and secondary datasets may not have simple answers.

3

Power imbalance

Students may recruit classmates or participants who feel unable to refuse.

4

Data privacy risks

Small samples and detailed quotes can reveal identities indirectly.

5

Publication pressure

Pressure to publish can encourage selective reporting or weak citation habits.

6

Disciplinary differences

Authorship, citation, and data-sharing norms vary across fields.

Common Mistakes by Students and Beginning Researchers

Most integrity problems can be prevented with better planning and documentation.

- ✕ Starting data collection before ethics approval or supervisor permission.
- ✕ Using technical consent forms that participants cannot easily understand.
- ✕ Assuming anonymous online content can be freely quoted without ethical consideration.
- ✕ Copying source wording while taking notes and forgetting what was copied.
- ✕ Changing a few words and calling it paraphrasing.
- ✕ Citing sources listed in another article without reading them.
- ✕ Ignoring conflicts of interest or authorship expectations until submission.
- ✕ Leaving data files unprotected on shared devices or cloud folders.

Best Practices: A Practical Integrity Checklist

Use this checklist before submitting a proposal, assignment, thesis, or article.

- ✓ **Before the study** — Confirm ethics-review requirements; write clear consent materials; plan secure data storage.
- ✓ **During data collection** — Follow approved procedures; record decisions; avoid pressure or deception unless justified and approved.
- ✓ **During writing** — Separate your notes from copied text; cite while drafting; paraphrase from understanding.
- ✓ **Before submission** — Check citations, quotes, figures, permissions, AI disclosure, authorship, and conflicts of interest.
- ✓ **After submission** — Correct errors transparently and keep data/records according to policy.

Good practice is a habit: document decisions early instead of trying to repair problems later.

COMPARISON

Comparison Table: Acceptable Practice vs Misconduct

Not all poor practice is misconduct, but all poor practice weakens research credibility.

Area	Acceptable / responsible practice	Questionable practice	Misconduct / serious breach
Data	Record observations accurately.	Poor file organization; missing documentation.	Fabricating or falsifying data.
Writing	Paraphrase and cite correctly.	Patchwriting or incomplete citation.	Submitting copied work as original.
Authorship	Credit real contribution.	Unclear contribution roles.	Gift or ghost authorship.
Analysis	Use justified analysis plan.	Selective reporting without explanation.	Manipulating results to fit a desired conclusion.
Participants	Consent and safeguards.	Weak or confusing consent materials.	Collecting data without required approval.

Emerging Ethical Considerations

Modern research raises new questions about AI, data reuse, and transparency.

Generative AI

Disclose allowed use; verify sources; do not invent citations or methods.

Open data

Balance transparency with privacy, consent, and community expectations.

Online research

Public accessibility does not automatically remove ethical responsibility.

Algorithmic bias

Consider whether datasets, models, or instruments disadvantage groups.

Reproducibility

Share methods, code, and decisions when appropriate and safe.

Community impact

Consider possible stigma, misuse, or harm from findings.

ACTIVITY

Classroom Activity: Ethical Decision Audit

A short group exercise for applying the lecture concepts.

Activity objective

Students evaluate a short research plan and identify ethical risks, plagiarism risks, and integrity safeguards.

Instructions

Form groups of 3–4.
Choose one study idea from your discipline.
List three participant risks and three academic-integrity risks.
Write one practical safeguard for each risk.

Expected outcome

Each group presents a one-minute ethics checklist for its proposed study.

Discussion Questions

Use these prompts for seminar discussion, reflection, or online forums.

1. Why is informed consent more than a signature?
2. Can a study be scientifically strong but ethically unacceptable? Explain.
3. When does poor paraphrasing become plagiarism?
4. Should students be allowed to use generative AI in academic writing? Under what conditions?
5. How should researchers balance open data with participant confidentiality?
6. What makes authorship fair in group research projects?
7. How can supervisors and teachers reduce plagiarism risk before submission?
8. What should a researcher do after discovering an honest error in published work?

ASSESSMENT

Knowledge Check

Answer individually first, then compare in pairs.

1. What are the three Belmont principles commonly used in human-subject research ethics?

2. Which term refers to making up data or results?

3. A student changes a few words from a source and cites it. What risk remains?

4. Name two elements that should appear in an informed consent process.

5. What is the difference between confidentiality and anonymity?

6. Give one example of a conflict of interest in research.

7. What is gift authorship?

8. Why is collecting only necessary data an ethical practice?

Answer key appears on the next slide.

Answer Key

Suggested answers for the knowledge check.

1 Respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.

2 Fabrication.

3 Patchwriting or poor paraphrasing; the structure may still be too close.

4 Purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, voluntary participation, withdrawal rights, data use, contact details.

5 Confidentiality means identity is known but protected; anonymity means identity is not collected or cannot be linked.

6 For example: a funder, employer, supervisor relationship, financial interest, or personal connection influencing the study.

7 Listing someone as an author without a sufficient scholarly contribution.

8 It reduces privacy risk and limits potential harm if data are lost or misused.

SUMMARY

Key Takeaways

The most important points to remember.

1. **Ethics begins at design**

   Plan consent, recruitment, privacy, and risk management before collecting data.

2. **Integrity is evidence quality**

   Honest data, careful analysis, and transparent reporting make research credible.

3. **Plagiarism is broader than text**

   Words, ideas, structure, data, images, and AI output may require acknowledgement.

4. **Citation is a research skill**

   Good notes, paraphrasing, and accurate references prevent many problems.

5. **Transparency builds trust**

   Disclose limitations, conflicts, authorship contributions, and permitted tool use.

Conclusion

Ethics and academic integrity are central to trustworthy research.

Research ethics protects people and communities. Academic integrity protects the value of ideas, evidence, and scholarly contribution. Together, they make research useful, credible, and worthy of public trust.

Plan ethical safeguards early.
Write from understanding and cite accurately.
Report methods, data, and limitations honestly.
Ask for guidance when rules or situations are unclear.

References

Selected credible sources in APA 7th edition format.

American Psychological Association. (2020). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.
Committee on Publication Ethics. (n.d.). COPE guidance. https://publicationethics.org/guidance
International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. (2026). Recommendations for the conduct, reporting, editing, and publication of scholarly work in medical journals. https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/
National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. (1979). The Belmont report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
Office of Research Integrity. (n.d.). Definition of research misconduct. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://ori.hhs.gov/definition-research-misconduct
Office of Research Integrity. (n.d.). ORI policy on plagiarism. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://ori.hhs.gov/ori-policy-plagiarism
Steneck, N. H. (2007). ORI introduction to the responsible conduct of research. Office of Research Integrity.
World Conference on Research Integrity. (2010). Singapore statement on research integrity. https://www.wcrif.org/guidance/singapore-statement
World Medical Association. (2024). WMA Declaration of Helsinki: Ethical principles for medical research involving human participants. https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki/

Thank You

Author: Muhammad Hassan
Website: ResearchMethod.net

Visit ResearchMethod.net for research guides, templates, lecture slides, examples, and academic resources.